

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY AF/S-DKEOGH:LFS
APPROVED BY D-MR. CHRISTOPHER
AF-DKPETTERSON
S/S-O :SRPVALERGA
NSC-DAARON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 157798

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: DEPUTY SECRETARY MEETS WITH JOSHUA
NKOMO

SUMMARY: DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER MET WITH JOSHUA
NKOMO JUNE 19, AND RAISED WITH HIM THE IDEA OF A SMALL,
PRIVATE LOW-LEVEL MEETING TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR AN ALL-
PARTIES CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA. NKOMO SAID HE WOULD
HAVE TO CHECK WITH HIS PARTY AND WITH MUGABE BEFORE
GIVING US AN ANSWER. HE STRESSED THAT HE FELT LESS NEED
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TO TALK TO THE SALISBURY GROUP EACH DAY, AS THEY WERE
GROWING WEAKER AND HE WAS GROWING STRONGER. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER, ACCOMPANED BY DAVID
AARON OF THE NSC AND DON PETTERSON OF AF, MET WITH
JOSHUA NKOMO DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON.
NKOMO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CALIXTUS NDHLOVU, NEW YORK ZAPU

REPRESENTATIVE. (THE DEPUTY SECRETARY MET WITH NKOMO SINCE THE SECRETARY WAS DELAYED BY AN EXTENDED SESSION WITH THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE.) CHRISTOPHER OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY REITERATING US DEDICATION TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN SEEKING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION FOR RHODESIA, A COURSE HE SAID WE WERE FOLLOWING NOTWITHSTANDING MUCH OPINION IN THE US WHICH WAS FAVORABLE

TO THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT. CHRISTOPHER ASKED NKOMO WHAT HIS REACTION WOULD BE TO, AS A NEXT STEP, A QUIET ADVANCE MEETING AT THE WORKING LEVEL TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE.

2. NKOMO CLAIMED THAT THIS WAS A PROPOSITION HE WAS HEARING FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEREFORE HE WOULD HAVE TO STUDY THE IDEA AND DISCUSS IT FIRST WITH ZAPU AND THEN WITH MUGABE. HE RECOUNTED HIS VERSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, STRESSING THE PF'S COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE AS REFLECTED IN ITS WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING, EVEN THOUGH IN HIS VIEW SUCH A MEETING REPRESENTED A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE AAP. THE PF, HE SAID, HAD BEEN WILLING FOR MONTHS TO TALK. BUT NOW, WITH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT CRUMBLING, EACH DAY IT BECAME LESS NECESSARY TO MEET WITH THE SALISBURY GROUP. HE DESCRIBED THE SALISBURY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AS MEN OF STRAW. ONCE THEY FAILED, THE PF WOULD SEE NO REASON TO

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MEET WITH THEM.

3. MR. CHRISTOPHER SAID THE US BELIEVED THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WAS ENCOUNTERING GREAT DIFFICULTIES. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS THE TIME FOR URGENT WORK TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS. AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING, IF IT WAS TO SUCCEED, HAD TO BE WELL PREPARED WITH AN AGENDA SET OUT AND ARRANGEMENTS PROPERLY MADE. THE KIND OF MEETING WE WERE SUGGESTING MIGHT PREPARE FOR A BROADER CONFERENCE.

4. MR. AARON ASKED NKOMO FOR HIS VIEW OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. NKOMO SAID THE SALISBURY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD ARRANGE FOR A CEASEFIRE, AND THEN WORK OUT A CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM AND HOLD AN ELECTION. HOWEVER, THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE A CEASEFIRE. THE AFRICANS ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD NO CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY SITUATION, NKOMO SAID, AND CONSEQUENTLY HE WAS BAFFLED AS TO WHY SMITH HAD EVER BELIEVED THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WOULD WORK. IT WAS NOW DISINTEGRATING AND NKOMO PREDICTED THAT AS SOON AS IT DID, THE RHODESIAN DEFENSE FORCES (RDF) WOULD COLLAPSE. THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN ONLY A DEVICE TO PROP

UP THE MORALE OF THE RDF.WHEN THE SETTLEMENT COLLAPSED,
SO WOULD THE RDF.

5. AT THAT POINT, AARON ASKED, WHAT WOULD NKOMO DO?
NKOMO SAID HE EXPECTED SALISBURY TO MAKE HIM AN OFFER.
HE EXPECTED THAT THEN IT WOULD BE SMITH AND THE BRITISH
NEGOTIATING WITH HIM. IN HIS VIEW THE AFRICANS WOULD
HAVE LITTLE ROLE TO PLAY. FOR THIS REASON HE SAID THE
CONCEPT OF AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING "WAS GETTING OUT OF

DATE." THE PF SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO WAIT UNTIL ITS
OPPONENTS WERE DEFEATED AND THEN RUSH IN TO PICK UP THE
PIECES FOR THEM.

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6. AARON ASKED FOR NKOMO'S COMMENT ON A DIFFERENT
SCENARIO IN WHICH NO CEASEFIRE OCCURRED BUT SALISBURY
WAS ABLE TO CARRY OFF AN ELECTION. IN THAT CIRCUMSTANCE
THE US WOULD BE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO CHANGE OUR
POSITION . NKOMO ASSERTED
THAT SUCH A SCENARIO WOULD NEVER COME TO PASS. HE
SAID THAT SALISBURY WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO HOLD AN
ELECTION. THE MILITARY SITUATION WAS GETTING WORSE
EVERY DAY (WITH REPRISALS BEING INFLICTED ON THE POPULATION
BY THE RDF, FOR WHICH MUZOREWA AND OTHERS MUST SHARE THE
BLAME). THIS WOULD PREVENT THE CURRENT REGIME FROM
CONDUCTING AN ELECTION.

7. CHRISTOPHER ASKED NKOMO TO KEEP OUR SUGGESTION OF A
SMALL PRIVATE ADVANCE MEETING CONFIDENTIAL. HE SAID HE
TOOK NKOMO'S POINT ON THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION. HE
ASKED NKOMO WHY HE THOUGHT THE AAP WAS NOW OUT OF DATE.
NKOMO SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS "GETTING OUT OF DATE" BUT
HAD NOT YET REACHED THAT STAGE. HE ASKED IF THE US HAD
DISCUSSED THE IDEA FOR AN ADVANCE MEETING WITH MUGABE.
PETTERSON SAID YES, BUT THAT MUGABE HAD NOT BEEN KEEN ON
THE IDEA.

8. NKOMO ASKED ABOUT AMERICAN STATEMENTS THAT THE PF
RELIED ON CUBAN AND SOVIET TROOPS. MR. CHRISTOPHER SAID
HE WAS SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY NKOMO'S COMMENT ON "FACE
THE NATION" THAT THERE WERE NO CUBANS IN ZAMBIA HELPING
ZAPU. "HONESTLY," NKOMO SAID "THERE ARE NONE. THERE
ARE NO CUBANS IN ZAMBIA. YOUR INFORMATION IS WRONG."
NKOMO SAID THAT INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT CUBANS, THE US
SHOULD DO POSITIVE THINGS. NKOMO ASSERTED THAT ZAPU HAD
NOT ASKED ONLY THE CUBANS FOR HELP. THEY HAD ASKED BOTH
EASTERN AND WESTERN COUNTRIES. ONLY THE EAST HAD SUPPLIED
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ARMS, AND ZAPU WOULD OBTAIN WEAPONS FROM WHEREVER POSSIBLE.
AS FOR THE US, EVEN HUMANITARIAN AID HAD BEEN VERY
LITTLE AND SLOW IN COMING.

9. NKOMO INSISTED THAT AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, AND
RECENT PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA SUPPORTING
MAJORITY RULE, WERE ONLY A TOKEN. HE ASKED FOR POSITIVE
SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.
MR. AARON STRESSED THAT THE US DID NOT SEEK AN EAST/WEST
CONFRONTATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE SAID THAT THE
DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND THE COMMITMENT OF AMERICAN PRESTIGE
TO NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA SHOULD MAKE

IT CLEAR WHERE WE STOOD. NKOMO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SUPPORT
BUT SAID THAT WITHOUT CONCRETE STEPS TO HELP, THE US WAS
NOT REALLY WITH THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT. VANCE

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